

Suffield Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting: August 7, 2023; 7:30 P.M.
Town Hall Upper Level Meeting Room

Commissioner Schwemmer called The Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 7, 2023.

Attendees: Commissioner

John Schwemmer
Beth Tracey
Klaire Bielonko (Alternate)
Aysha Moore-Manwaring (Alternate)

Absent: Commissioner

Doug Mayne
Crystal Quandt (Alternate)
Bill Moryto
Scott MacClintic

Designation of Voting Members: Voting rights were designated to alternate members Klaire Bielonko and Aysha Moore-Manwaring

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Tracey motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2023 Special Meeting as presented. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness

a. 156 S. Main Street, Proposed New Dormer

The owner of 156 S. Main Street addressed the commission and explained the proposed dormer project. He described it as a “simple shed dormer” and referenced photos that had been sent to the group for review. The commission asked if additional diagrams, including detailed information, were available. The applicant stated he did not have any additional diagrams; however, he proceeded to quote random elevations and dimensions for consideration.

The commission expressed their disappointment that the drawings provided did not include the type of detail required for proper consideration. Commissioner Tracey suggested that there were other ways to achieve what was being proposed, including cutting the roofline. The owner was quick to dismiss this line of thought and argued for why a simple “shed dormer” or “cricket dormer” were the only two options available in this particular situation.

The owner was asked numerous questions and a lengthy discussion ensued. The commission members asked to see a design that would better incorporate the architecture of the building and would provide more of a proportionate balance. The owner continued to explain why nothing else would work, especially considering the pitch of the roof. He disagreed with the alternative options presented and asked the commission to simply tell him which design they wanted. The commissioners stated that they do not make those types of decisions. The owner replied that he would not be paying an architect to draw up two designs; the options were cricket or shed dormer. He reiterated the details of both dormers. He pushed the commission to make a decision as to whether they wanted a shed or cricket dormer or to simply have them say “*Jim we don’t want anything there...just live with the situation you have.*” He noted he would “*be good with any of those decisions.*”

Commissioner Moore-Manwaring stated that her personal opinion would be to do nothing if the owner was not willing to provide any other alternatives. She felt the sketch provided had the appearance of being “pasted on.” Commissioner Bielonko argued that the sketch being discussed had not been officially presented. Commissioner Tracey noted that the sketch being discussed was at least close; however, it still did not illustrate the detail they would need to make a decision.

Commissioner Tracey expressed again that the commission would like to see more detail, as it seemed as though no thought had been put into the design presented. The owner asked for clarification and Commissioner Tracey said they would like to see elevations showing the placement of the windows relative to the dormer, dimensions of how far the dormer would be from the front and drawings that were drawn to scale. She emphasized verbal explanations would not suffice.

The owner thanked the commission for their time, stated the commission had already approved the shingles on the roof at an earlier meeting, and this would solve a safety issue that is technically “grandfathered.” He continued to argue that coming back with drawings would not change anything.

Discussion ensued as to whether the commission should make a motion to approve/deny, or if the agenda item should be tabled until more information could be provided. The owner was asked what his preference would be. He responded that he could not afford to wait another month to begin work on this project. The commission explained that if they were asked to vote today, the answer would be no. The owner stated that he appreciated the option to table, but he would prefer that the commission vote no.

Commissioner Tracey motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to deny the application on the basis that the information provided does not include enough detail to make a judgment in favor, which is what the applicant is asking with regard to the dormer.

Commissioner Schwemmer agreed with the motion as described and wanted to note for the record that the planned location of the dormer was well off from where it was shown on the drawings that were presented for review by many feet.

Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion to deny the application for a certificate of appropriateness passed unanimously.

b. 257 N. Main Street, Proposed New Garage

The owner of 257 N. Main Street addressed the commission and explained why he was proposing a new garage on the property. The owner and his consultant provided an overview of the project which includes a proposed 3-car detached garage. The commission members reviewed the information and asked questions, which the owner and his consultant answered accordingly. The commission determined, based on the level of detail provided, the project could move forward without issue.

Commissioner Moore-Manwaring motioned and Commissioner Tracey seconded to approve the proposed new garage as submitted. Vote: 3-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business: All commissioners agreed that there was no new business to discuss.

The new owners of 99-103 High Street asked for guidance relating to building permits, which the commissioners provided accordingly.

Commissioner Tracey motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary